



National
Qualifications

History

Project-dissertation

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the Coursework Component of Advanced Higher History Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

Valid from session 2015/16 and until further notice

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Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Advanced Higher History project-dissertation.

This project-dissertation is worth 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the project-dissertation Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the Assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the project-dissertation in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ identifying an appropriate complex historical issue for research
- ◆ using information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ drawing on in-depth knowledge and understanding
- ◆ analysing perspectives from historiography
- ◆ synthesising evidence and historiography in a sustained and coherent line of argument
- ◆ drawing a well-reasoned conclusion based on evidence
- ◆ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this project-dissertation is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a complex historical issue. Candidates may choose a title from the list of approved titles if they wish, but they are free to research any complex historical issue.

Assessment overview

Candidates should choose an appropriate complex historical issue. They should research the issue; analyse perspectives from historiography; show in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issue; refer to current historiography; synthesise evidence into a line of argument leading to a conclusion, and reference their findings clearly.

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of issue which will enable candidates to meet all the requirements of this assignment. They may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen issue.

Candidates should work on their project-dissertation with minimum support from the assessor.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This project-dissertation will be set by centres within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control. The evidence for assessment will be produced independently by the candidate in time to meet a submission date set by SQA.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be after they have started work on the Units in the Course.

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be 4,000 words, excluding references and appendices. The word count should be submitted with the project-dissertation.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment, or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, eg advice on how to develop a project plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Assessor comments on the selection of a topic are appropriate before the candidate starts the task.

Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the wording of a brief or specification or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Once work on the assessment has begun, all the candidate's work must be their own.

Assessor input and advice on the candidate's plan is acceptable in order to allow the candidate to progress to the next stages of the assessment. The assistance provided must be recorded so that the candidate's own planning work can be marked/judged fairly.

The project-dissertation will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that, although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place. Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, film or audio evidence

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ candidate's completed project-dissertation

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following General Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Part One: General Marking Principles for Advanced Higher History project-dissertation

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this project-dissertation. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- (a) Marks for each candidate response will **always** be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) Candidates can structure their dissertations in a variety of ways and may also demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways and at different points in their dissertation. Markers will credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding wherever they appear in the dissertation.
- (d) Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which are not covered by either these principles or the Detailed Marking Instructions.
- (e) The word limit for this project-dissertation is 4,000 words (excluding references, bibliography, appendices, etc). The word count should be submitted with the completed project-dissertation. No marks will be awarded for the content of references, bibliography appendices, etc.
- (f) If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied. If a marker believes that the Coursework is more than 10% beyond the word limit, they should mark the candidate's work as normal then refer this to the Principal Assessor. They must state clearly that it is being referred for being beyond the word limit. Markers should take a common-sense view of the length of the work and not, for example, refer a piece for being only a few words beyond the limit.
- (g) Candidates will be given credit for appropriate referencing or inclusion of relevant appendices. This should not be used as a way of moving information from the body of the dissertation to bypass word count restrictions.

Part Two: Detailed marking instructions

To obtain more than 24 marks, there **must** be a reference to primary sources and to historiography. If the candidate does not refer to and evaluate primary sources then they are not meeting the requirements of the task. Advanced Higher History dissertations require that depth in the study and there should be a consideration of both primary and secondary sources. If the candidate is unable to show that they have referred to or quoted from historians, or considered historical schools of thought, then they are not meeting the basic requirements of the marks scheme.

Responses will be assessed against the following four criteria:

- ◆ structure
- ◆ analysis/evaluation/line of argument
- ◆ thoroughness/relevance of information and approach
- ◆ historical sources/interpretations

The two key criteria which are used to help determine where a dissertation is placed within a mark range are analysis/evaluation/line of argument, and thoroughness.

The descriptions on the marking grid in the Coursework (candidate task) document provide guidance on the features of dissertations falling within mark ranges. Most dissertations will exhibit some, but perhaps not all, of the features listed; others will be stronger in one area than another. Features described in one column may well appear in a response which overall falls more within another column(s). **'Historical sources/interpretations' is the only criteria area that should be thought of as a hurdle. The others are not.** Markers should reward what the candidate has tried to argue and not penalise what may have been omitted. A candidate's arguments and evidence may differ substantially from the marks scheme, but the candidate should still be given whatever credit they deserve.

The Marking Instructions in the Coursework (candidate task) document describe the typical qualities of responses. Individual candidate responses do not follow a set pattern and some responses may fall outside these descriptions, or be close to two or more descriptions. Where this is the case, markers will use their professional expertise in awarding marks appropriately.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Clarification on reference to primary sources and word count.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

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